

Troilus and
Criseyde.
Liber II.

Fro day to day, til this day, by the morwe,
Hir love of freendship have I to thee wonne,
And also hath she leyd hir feyth to borwe.
Algate a foot is hameled of thy sorwe.
What sholde I lenger sermon of it holde?
As ye han herd bifore, al he him tolde.

But right as floures, thorough the colde of night
Yclosed, stoupen on hir stalkes lowe,
Redressen hem ayein the sonne bright,
And spreden on hir kinde cours by rowe;
Right so gan tho his eyen up to throwe
This Troilus, and seyde: O Venus dere,
Thy might, thy grace, yheried be it here!

And to Pandare he held up bothe his hondes,
And seyde: Lord, al thyn be that I have;
for I am hool, al brosten been my bondes;
A thousand Troians who so that me yave,
Eche after other, God so wis me save,
Ne mighte me so gladen; lo, myn herte,
It spredeth so for joye, it wol tosterte!

But Lord, how shal I doon, how shal I liven?
Whan shal I next my dere herte see?
How shal this longe tyme away be driven,
Til that thou be ayein at hir fro me?
Thou mayst answer, Abyd, abyd, but he
That hangeth by the nekke, sooth to seyne,
In grete disese abydeh for the peyne.

Al esily, now, for the love of Marte,
Quod Pandarus, for every thing hath tyme;
So longe abyd til that the night departe;
for al so siker as thou lyst here by me,
And God toform, I wol be there at pryme,
And for thy werk somewhat as I shal seye,
Or on som other wight this charge leye.

for pardee, God wot, I have ever yit
Ben redy thee to serve, and to this night
Have I nought fayned, but emforth my wit
Don al thy lust, and shal with al my might.
Do now as I shal seye, and fare aright;
And if thou nilt, wyte al thyself thy care,
On me is nought along thyn yvel fare.

I woot wel that thou wyser art than I
A thousand fold, but if I were as thou,
God helpe me so, as I wolde outrely,
Right of myn owene hond, wryte hir right now
A lettre, in which I wolde hir tellen how
I ferde amis, and hir beseche of routhe;
Now help thyself, and leve it not for slouthe.

And I myself shal therwith to hir goon;
And whan thou wost that I am with hir there,
Worth thou upon a courser right anon,
Ye, hardily, right in thy beste gere,
And ryd forth by the place, as nought ne were,
And thou shalt finde us, if I may, sittinge
At som windowe, into the strete lokinge.

And if thee list, than maystow us saluwe,
492

And upon me make thy contenance;
But, by thy lyf, be war and faste eschuwe
To tarien ought, God shilde us fro mischaunce!
Ryd forth thy wey, and hold thy governaunce;
And we shal speke of thee somewhat, I trowe,
Whan thou art goon, to do thyne eres glowe!

Touching thy lettre, thou art wys ynough,
I woot thou nilt it digneliche endyte;
As make it with thise argumentes tough;
Ne scrivenish or craftily thou it wryte;
Beblotte it with thy teres eek a lyte;
And if thou wryte a goodly word al softe,
Though it be good, reherce it not to ofte.

for though the beste harpoun upon lyve
Wolde on the beste souned joly harpe
That ever was, with alle his fingers fyve,
Touche ay o streng, or ay o werbul harpe,
Were his nayles poynted never so sharpe,
It shulde maken every wight to dulle,
To here his glee, and of his strokes fulle.

Ne jompre eek no discordaunt thing yfere,
As thus, to usen termes of phisyk;
In loves termes, hold of thy matere
The forme alwey, and do that it be lyk;
for if a peyntour wolde peynte a pyk
With asses feet, and hede it as an ape,
It cordeth nought; so nere it but a jape.

This counseyl lyked wel to Troilus;
But, as a dreedful lover, he seyde this:
Alas, my dere brother Pandarus,
I am ashamed for to wryte, ywis,
Lest of myn innocence I seyde amis,
Or that she nolde it for despyt receyve;
Thanne were I deed, ther mighte it nothing
weyve.

To that Pandare answerde: If thee lest,
Do that I seye, and lat me therwith goon;
for by that Lord that formed est and west,
I hope of it to bringe answer anon
Right of hir hond, and if that thou nilt noon,
Lat be; and sory mote he been his lyve,
Ayeins thy lust that helpeth thee to thryve.

Quod Troilus: Depardieu, I assente;
Sin that thee list, I will aryse and wryte;
And blisful God preye ich, with good entente,
The vyage, and the lettre I shal endyte,
So spede it; and thou, Minerva, the whyte,
Yif thou me wit my lettre to devyse;
And sette him down, and wroot right in this
wyse.

first he gan hir his righte lady calle,
His hertes lyf, his lust, his sorwes leche,
His blisse, and eek this othere termes alle,
That in swich cas these lovers alle seche;
And in ful humble wyse, as in his speche,
He gan him recomaunde unto hir grace;
To telle al how, it axeth muchel space.

And after this, ful lowly he hir prayde
To be nought wrooth, though he, of his folye,
So hardy was to hir to wryte, and seyde,
That love it made, or elles moste he dye,
And pitously gan mercy for to crye;
And after that he seyde, and ley ful loude,
Himself was litel worth, and lesse he coude;

And that she sholde han his conning excused,
That litel was, and eek he dredde hir so,
And his unworthinesse he ay acused;
And after that, than gan he telle his wo;
And that was endeles, withouten ho;
And seyde, he wolde in trouthe alwey him holde;
And radde it over, and gan the lettre folde.

And with his salte teres gan he bathe
The ruby in his signet, and it sette
Upon the wax deliverliche and rathe;
Therwith a thousand tymes, er he lette,
He histe tho the lettre that he shette,
And seyde: Lettre, a blisful destinee
Thee shapen is, my lady shat thee see.

This Pandare took the lettre, and that by tyme
Amorwe, and to his neces paleys sterte,
And faste he swoor, that it was passed pryme,
And gan to jape, and seyde: Ywis, myn herte,
So fresh it is, although it sore smerte,
I may not slepe never a Mayes morwe;
I have a joly wo, a lusty sorwe.

Criseyde, whan that she hir uncle herde,
With dreedful herte, and desirous to here
The cause of his cominge, thus answerde:
Now by your feyth, myn uncle, quod she, dere,
What maner windes gydeh yow now here?
Tel us your joly wo and your penaunce,
How ferforth be ye put in loves daunce.

By God, quod he, I hope alwey bihinde!
And she to laughe, it thoughte hir herte breste.
Quod Pandarus: Loke alwey that ye finde
Game in myn hood, but herkne, if yow leste;
Ther is right now come into toune a geste,
A Greek espye, and telleth newe thinges,
for which come I to telle yow tydinges.

Into the gardin go we, and we shal here,
Al prevely, of this a long sermoun.
With that they wenten arm in arm yfere
Into the gardin from the chaumbre down.
And whan that he so fer was that the soun
Of that he speke, no man here mighte,
He seyde hir thus, and out the lettre plighete:

Lo, he that is al hoolly youre free
Him recomaundeth lowly to your grace,
And sent to you this lettre here by me;
Hyseth you on it, whan ye han space,
And of som goodly answer yow purchase;
Or, helpe me God, so pleyntly for to seyne,
He may not longe liven for his peyne.

ful dredfully tho gan she stonde stille,
And took it nought, but al hir humble chere
Gan for to chaunge, and seyde: Scrit ne bille,
for love of God, that toucheth swich matere,
Ne bring me noon; and also, uncle dere,
To myn estat have more reward, I preye,
Than to his lust; what sholde I more seye?

And loketh now if this be resonable,
And letteth nought, for favour ne for slouthe,
To seyn a sooth; now were it covenable
To myn estat, by God, and by your trouthe,
To taken it, or to han of him routhe,
In harming of myself or in repreve?
Ber it ayein, for him that ye on leve!

This Pandarus gan on hir for to stare,
And seyde: Now is this the grettest wonder
That ever I sey! lat be this nyce fare!
To deethe mote I smiten be with thonder,
If, for the citee which that stondeh yonder,
Wolde I a lettre unto yow bringe or take
To harm of yow; what list yow thus it make?

But thus ye faren, wel neigh alle and some,
That he that most desireth yow to serve,
Of him ye recche leest wher he bcome,
And whether that he live or elles sterve.
But for al that that ever I may deserve,
Refuse it nought, quod he, and hente hir faste,
And in hir bosom the lettre doun he thraste,

And seyde hir: Now cast it away anon,
That folk may seen and gauren on us tweye.
Quod she: I can abyde til they be goon.
And gan to smyle, and seyde him: Sem, I preye,
Swich answer as yow list yourself purveye,
for trewely I nil no lettre wryte,
No? than wol I, quod he, so ye endyte.

Therwith she lough, and seyde: Go we dyne.
And he gan at himself to jape faste,
And seyde: Nece, I have so greet a pyne
for love, that every other day I faste;
And gan his beste japes forth to caste;
And made hir so to laughe at his folye,
That she for laughter wende for to dye.

And whan that she was comen into halle:
Now, eem, quod she, we wol go dyne anon;
And gan some of hir women to hir calle,
And streyght into hir chaumbre gan she goon;
But of hir businesses, this was oon
Amonges othere thinges, out of drede,
ful prively this lettre for to rede;

Avysed word by word in every lyne,
And fond no lak, she thoughte he coude good;
And up it putte, and went hir in to dyne.
And Pandarus, that in a study stood,
Er he was war, she took him by the hood,
And seyde: Ye were caught er that ye wiste;
I vouche sauf, quod he, do what yow liste.

Troilus and
Criseyde.
Liber II.